

## ACTIONS & TIMELINES

### Community Preparedness & Infrastructure

# GOAL C4

## GOAL C4

Make County government more adaptable to provide continued services in disasters through comprehensive planning, a more empowered workforce, and improved facilities and technology.

### ACTIONS COMPLETED:

- ✓ Removed thousands of burned trees along County roads that pose risk to safety.
- ✓ Awarded a \$1,082,969 grant from CalFire to Transportation and Public Works to assess fire fuel risks and tree mortality within the public right of way on 83 miles of roads in northwestern Sonoma County, and subsequently treat 30 miles of the highest priority areas.
- ✓ Applied for a Hazard Mitigation Grant to purchase and install an onsite generator for the roads.
- ✓ Mapped 4,952 fire-damaged properties, validated parcel data to expedite the Right of Entry process for debris removal, and collected field data to track progress of clearing.
- ✓ With Health Services and Human Services, completed phase one of Access Sonoma data integration project to enable the coordinated delivery of services to displaced fire victims.
- ✓ Implemented new cloud-based public website for emergency information designed for high traffic and optimized for mobile devices, [www.SoCoEmergency.org](http://www.SoCoEmergency.org).

## ACTIONS & TIMELINES

### Community Preparedness & Infrastructure

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### ACTIONS COMPLETED (continued):

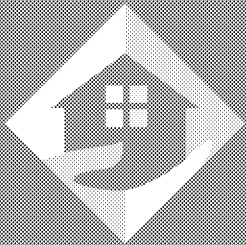


#### Improved data protection:

- Approved a memorandum of understanding with Alameda County to share data center space for connectivity equipment to enhance offsite protection of data backups and use site for potential recovery operations
- Approved \$1.7 million to improve information technology resiliency and operational capability.
- Established connections to cloud providers and implementing daily replication of critical data.
- Prepared and submitted Hazard Mitigation Grant application to fund improved power infrastructure for County primary data center supporting essential services.

## HOUSING

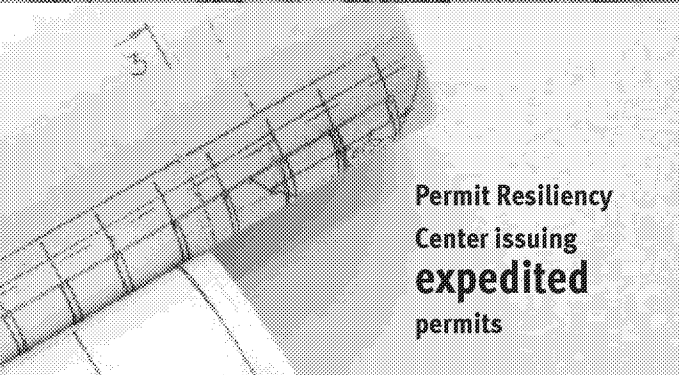
# VISION




Sonoma County envisions a housing market that is in balance; is resilient and climate smart at the regional, neighborhood, and homeowner scale; is affordable to area workers and individuals with access and functional needs; is where communities of color and other historically disadvantaged groups, including individuals with limited or no English proficiency and immigrants, have equal and fair access; respects designated community separators and urban growth boundaries; has a diversity of homes located near transit, jobs and services; and is where the economy is vital. To achieve this vision, the County is embracing a new regional approach to produce 30,000 new housing units by 2023.



AFFORDABLE



Permit Resiliency  
Center issuing  
**expedited**  
permits



**Reduced fees**  
on smaller ADUs to  
encourage smaller units  
that are affordable  
by design



Applied for Hazard Mitigation  
Grant Program Home Fire Mitigation  
to provide **cost share**  
**incentives**



EQUAL ACCESS

## BACKGROUND

Despite a lack of housing prior to the fires, the strength of the community was clear: neighborhoods had strong social ties, and people came together to support each other after the fires. Rebuilding quickly and building new affordable housing couldn't be more urgent to restore our community.

**Impact of Fires on Housing.** The October 2017 fires destroyed approximately 5,143 homes throughout Sonoma County, making this one of the most destructive fires in California history. The housing shortage, already critical before the fires, has become unsustainable. More housing was lost in one night than had been built in the County over the prior seven years.

Those who lost their homes in the fires face many challenges. In addition to their community and individual losses, they must overcome many obstacles as they rebuild their lives. These include: settling into new living arrangements; navigating insurance claims; finding architects; construction planning; obtaining permits; and facing uncertainty about contractor availability. They must determine whether it is possible to rebuild at the same location, size, and quality as the pre-fire home, how to meet new code requirements within available funds, and much more.

Meanwhile, those with insurance worry that their temporary housing funds will run out before their homes are rebuilt. In one survey related to the 2017 fires, 53% of the respondents reported not having settled the dwelling portion of their claim and 66% reported being underinsured on the dwelling portion.<sup>8</sup>

The fires affected 1,596 renter households, and approximately 2,200 renters were directly displaced. The fires also created a secondary wave of displacement through disaster-related market pressures. Renters have also been impacted by the rebuild process. They are often left with little hope of the home they were living in being rebuilt or rented to them at an affordable rate.

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<sup>8</sup> United Policyholders Six Month Survey

## BACKGROUND

Before the fires, many of those seeking new housing could neither find nor afford a decent place to live. The County already had very low vacancy rates—1.8% for rentals and 1% for homeowners<sup>9</sup>—and a housing market study released in April 2018 using pre-fire data estimated that Sonoma County needed 14,634 affordable rental units to meet demand. It also suggested that more than half of Sonoma County renters pay more than what is affordable for housing and that nearly a third spent more than 50% of their income on rent.<sup>10</sup>

The housing shortage also contributed to an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness. After seven years of declining rates, the 2018 Homeless Count shows a 6% increase in homelessness over 2017. This rate is likely to rise into 2019.

The Homeless Count also shows that an estimated 21,482 people are unstably housed. About half of these individuals report that they are living doubled up, couch surfing, or with no formal lease because of the fires. Roughly 2,363 people are secondarily displaced by the fires because owners whose homes burned in the fires and who now must occupy their rental properties, due to post-fire rent increases, or because of fire-related job loss. Of those who became unstably housed following the fires, 43% were over the age of 55.

Of the 16,666 people who registered for FEMA benefits in Sonoma County, 29% were 65 or older. Many older people are on fixed incomes and will struggle financially to rebuild their homes or find alternative housing in the current rental market.

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<sup>9</sup> Sonoma County Economic Development Board, County Profile 2017

<sup>10</sup> California Housing Partnership Corporation, Sonoma County's Housing Emergency and Proposed Solutions, April 2018

## BACKGROUND

After the fires, home prices in Sonoma County became increasingly out of reach for many potential homebuyers. Median home values reached \$681,333, up from \$604,380 in the previous twelve months.<sup>11</sup> This is an annual increase of 11%. Rents for undamaged units also rose at an annualized rate of 9.9% in the six months following the fires.<sup>12</sup>

At the same time, Sonoma County employers are finding it increasingly difficult to attract or retain workers due to high housing costs. A recent study found that 8,143 new housing units are needed by 2020 to keep up with projected household employment through that date.<sup>13</sup>

**Post-Fire Response.** As the County moved from response to recovery, a permitting office to expedite fire rebuilds was quickly put in place. The Resiliency Permit Center provides a “one-stop-shop,” with streamlined processes for residential permits related to the 2,264 homes lost in the unincorporated County. The City of Santa Rosa has a similar permit office processing residential permits for the 2,879 homes lost in the city limits.

As of November 13, 2018, 920 housing units have been submitted for review to the County. Of these, 679 units are permitted, 222 are in the review process, and the remainder are completed. In the City of Santa Rosa, 1,365 housing units have been submitted. Of these, 1,073 are permitted, 241 are being reviewed, and the remainder are completed. Combined, the 2,285 housing unit permits issued, under review, and already completed are 44% of the 5,143 housing units lost in the fires countywide.

Building new market-rate and affordable housing countywide has even greater urgency as the County has not kept up with housing demand over the last decade. As this building begins, proper location is an important consideration and there has

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<sup>11</sup> April 2018 California Association of Realtors

<sup>12</sup> Scott Gerber Sonoma County Apartment Rent Survey, 2017 and 2018

<sup>13</sup> April 2018 Beacon Economics

## BACKGROUND

been a long-standing countywide commitment to avoid sprawl with new development. This has led to the creation of Urban Growth Boundaries and the identification of Priority Development Areas (PDAs) throughout Sonoma County in which most new housing is to occur.

The County's recovery efforts have centered on creating the conditions that attract private-sector developers to rebuild and build new housing for a range of income levels. They have also focused on ensuring that the County and its local government partners have the policies and practices in place to expedite planning, development, and construction.

Examples of these efforts include ensuring stronger coordination between the County and the nine cities to confirm the most appropriate housing locations; identifying County-owned land that can be used for housing and strategically preparing to partner with the development community; identifying changes to land use regulations, processes and procedures to enhance opportunities for innovative and nontraditional housing to encourage a wide range of development; and organizing local sources of financing for maximum incentive and leverage.

“AFFORDABILITY. Rental prices have skyrocketed after the fires. The ripple effect of the fires and loss of homes has forced many people out in order to afford a place to live.”

—COMMUNITY MEMBER



# CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Regional, state, and national political leaders have a strong interest in helping with fire recovery. Similarly, financial institutions, philanthropists, and businesses want to help make a positive difference in the long-term recovery. Positioning the County to work collaboratively with these groups for this common purpose is a chance to dramatically remake the housing landscape.

The greatest opportunity is public, private, and civic sectors sharing the same vision and working in concert to achieve this shared goal. This does not happen by chance or overnight. Instead, it is by the efforts of many working together that the goal will be achieved.

One of the County's challenges is the aspirational goal to build 30,000 housing units countywide. Concerns have been raised about the size of the goal, the location of potential units, and the timing of the delivery of the units. Some believe that this is too many units coming in too quickly, while others believe it is too few units coming in too slowly. Others have concerns about the particulars of the housing units, including how quickly the rebuild units are progressing, how many of the units will be affordable, and whether the units will be located in urban areas near transit, jobs, and other services.



## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Within currently approved General Plans countywide, there are roughly 46,000 housing units of capacity, if units are built to full plan capacity. Approximately 16,500 housing units are currently within the development process pipeline countywide. Early analysis shows that after accounting for the 16,500 housing units in the pipeline, the remaining 8,200 new housing units could, in theory, be accommodated within the Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and still leave additional capacity within the PDAs in the County.

A bright spot in the housing data is that Sonoma County is one of only twenty-two jurisdictions statewide to meet its regional housing need targets as assigned by the State. More than 500 other jurisdictions that do not meet Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) targets are subject to SB35 streamlining requirements. However, the County is still taking the necessary steps to streamline approval processes for infill projects when appropriate. Infill projects are important to reduce climate and service impacts and increase opportunities for workforce housing and other affordable housing, but respect established Urban Growth Boundaries.

The fires affected individuals and households within every socioeconomic status. The devastation did not distinguish by age, race, ethnicity, income, language, employment, education, or living conditions. Yet access to recovery resources, whether financial, physical and emotional, information and guidance, can differ because of individual or household characteristics. Challenges to rebuilding include historic and institutional biases that tend to direct housing resources primarily to white citizens. Implicit bias in the housing industry tends to keep people of color at a substantial disadvantage in the housing market.

Housing reconstruction and new housing construction will require a tremendous increase in the pace of permitting and it is likely that some neighborhoods may oppose any new development near them. Navigating the many opportunities and challenges will require an intentional and thoughtful approach that is balanced yet advances the County's vision for housing.

## COMMUNITY INPUT

Housing affordability and availability for both renters and owners was the theme of community input. This was the most common concern. Other concerns included making it easier to rebuild, providing recovery assistance for those in need, having the right location and product type for housing, maintaining or developing higher standards for housing being built, especially the need for housing to be resilient to future disasters, using public land for housing, and creating the ability to have more community engagement around housing issues.

Some key strategies the public identified as important for achieving our housing vision include identifying already entitled housing projects that are not moving forward and finding solutions to get them built, integrating housing strategies across all jurisdictions countywide, incorporating resiliency goals into the General Plan update, providing rental assistance and renter rights information regarding rising rental costs for Spanish speakers, and providing more resources to support the rebuilding efforts for those who lost their homes, both owner occupied and rental occupied.

Many housing-related agencies and service providers and the cities and other governmental jurisdictions also provided input. They identified three key strategies to meet housing needs countywide including taking a focused and unified approach to housing at regional/cross-jurisdictional level, developing risk mitigation funding pools that can provide housing developers with the certainty of funds throughout the full land development process, and sharing resources and data regionally.

The County has heard concerns regarding the gap between the temporary housing arrangements for those displaced by the fires and their permanent housing. This gap cuts across all housing types and incomes. Those displaced by the fires need additional resources to remain housed between now and when permanent housing is available. When insurance funding for additional living expenses and FEMA funding for temporary housing run out, and if new housing units are not yet available, there will be a second wave of crisis for those who lost their housing due to the fires.

## COMMUNITY INPUT

The ability of fire survivors to bridge the response to recovery period is critical to the success of our long-term housing solutions. Success requires regional cooperation with public and nonprofit housing agencies, grants and philanthropic organizations, and a sustained disaster case management program for all fire survivors.

Community engagement around housing will continue and increase as required by the use of federal and state funds, and as it relates to the County's Fair Housing and Civil Rights obligations.

“Housing is NOT affordable for young workers. Younger families are moving to other states to be able to afford to live and enjoy life.”

— COMMUNITY MEMBER





## STRATEGY AREA 2

### Housing

# GOALS

1. Attract new and expanded sources of capital to incentivize the creation of housing for all income levels.
2. Increase regulatory certainty by changing the County's business model and actively seek opportunities to deepen regional cooperation.
3. Support building and development standards with improved local hazard resiliency and reduced climate impacts.
4. Support rebuilding fire destroyed homes.
5. Explore use of County-owned property to attract housing development that aligns with County goals.

## ACTIONS & TIMELINES

### Housing

# GOAL H1

## GOAL H1

Attract new and expanded sources of capital to incentivize the creation of housing for all income levels.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:	0-1 YEAR THROUGH 2019	2-3 YEARS 2020-2021	3+ YEARS 2022+
Form a Renewal Enterprise District (RED) as a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to ensure coordination and facilitate pooled financing that supports a regional, shared housing vision.			
Execute Joint Powers Authority Agreement with the City of Santa Rosa as a two-year pilot.			
Coordinate funding and financing strategies with all municipalities seeking to encourage affordable housing.			
Pursue legislation to enhance effectiveness of RED JPA and garner State financial support.			
Engage financial institutions to develop new, more targeted debt and equity projects.			
Engage developers to discern true capital needs and tailor available County and City funds to promote quality projects.			
Continue to convene an array of institutions to develop new capital structures that mitigate financing risks and incentivize quality projects.			
Join the California Public Finance Authority JPA and utilize its available financing tools.			
Develop financing tool for ADUs.			

## ACTIONS & TIMELINES

### Housing

# GOAL H1

## GOAL H1

Attract new and expanded sources of capital to incentivize the creation of housing for all income levels.

PROPOSED ACTIONS (continued):	0-1 YEAR THROUGH 2019	2-3 YEARS 2020-2021	3+ YEARS 2022+
Secure the maximum amount of federal and state affordable housing funds.			
Support California Housing and Community Development Department's Unmet Needs Analysis and Action Plan for deployment of CDBG-DR.			
Support passage of local and state housing bonds.			
Conduct a robust Assessment of Fair Housing to document needs and opportunities, and ensure findings and recommended actions are incorporated into housing plans going forward.			
Engage the business community to consider options for employers to support and invest in new housing.			
Deepen relationships with all relevant State agencies, including CalHFA, Strategic Growth Council, and the Tax Credit Allocating Committee.			
Assist EDB and Santa Rosa Metro Chamber to organize an Employer Housing Council, as called for in the <i>Strategic Sonoma</i> plan.			

## ACTIONS & TIMELINES

### Housing

# GOAL H1

## GOAL H1

Attract new and expanded sources of capital to incentivize the creation of housing for all income levels.

### ACTIONS COMPLETED:

- ✓ City of Santa Rosa and Board of Supervisors have agreed in concept to form the RED JPA.
- ✓ Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco convened lenders/financial institutions with the goal of increasing availability of capital for housing development.
- ✓ Secured \$250,000 capacity building funding from Tipping Point to enhance the effectiveness of the County's Community Development Commission.
- ✓ Secured \$1,000,000 start-up funding from Hewlett Foundation for RED JPA.
- ✓ Received targeted disaster waivers from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that increased flexibility for various housing assistance programs administered by CDC.
- ✓ Continue to use qualified national consulting firm to assist and position the County to receive CDBG-DR funds, and strategically utilize the funds for unmet needs.



## ACTIONS & TIMELINES

### Housing

# GOAL H2

## GOAL H2

Increase regulatory certainty by changing the County's business model and actively seek opportunities to deepen regional cooperation.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:	0-1 YEAR THROUGH 2019	2-3 YEARS 2020-2021	3+ YEARS 2022+
Identify potential changes to land use regulations, processes and procedures that could reduce the time to complete processes, decrease uncertainty in the approval process and reduce the cost of housing development, including fire recovery permits.			
Evaluate and bring forward for consideration multi-family standards, workforce housing combining zone standards near jobs, and other housing initiatives.			
Update Specific Plans, fee studies, and other planning documents to support meeting regional housing needs.			
Inform the General Plan Update process regarding issues related to housing location and standards, hazard mitigation, and resiliency.			
Consider opportunities for modernization and standardization of permitting to make it easier for developers to submit applications countywide.			
Enhance opportunities for innovative and non-traditional building types for a wide range of housing developments.			
Develop for consideration additional housing initiatives that may become apparent after the current round of initiatives has been implemented; recurring cycles of regulatory updates allows the regulations to evolve with the needs of the community and market.			
Support regional responses to the need for more and affordable housing that has exacerbated since the fires, including building of new housing units in Priority Development Areas in incorporated cities and coordinating with the Renewal Enterprise District (RED) and the Economic Development Board.			

## ACTIONS & TIMELINES

### Housing

# GOAL H2

## GOAL H2

Increase regulatory certainty by changing the County's business model and actively seek opportunities to deepen regional cooperation.

### ACTIONS COMPLETED:

- ✓ Increased the maximum size of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to 1,200 square feet.
- ✓ Reduced fees on smaller ADUs to encourage smaller units that are affordable by design.
- ✓ Increased the allowable residential floor area in mixed-use projects from 50 percent to 80 percent.
- ✓ Delayed collection of fees until near occupancy, rather than at permitting.
- ✓ Allowed small single room occupancy (SRO) projects as a permitted use and removed the existing 30-room limit for larger SRO projects.
- ✓ Allowed transitional and supportive housing in all zoning districts that allow single-family dwellings.
- ✓ Analyzed roughly 16,000 possible housing units in the development pipeline countywide. This is being utilized to identify roadblocks and develop solutions where possible.

## ACTIONS & TIMELINES

### Housing

# GOAL H3

## GOAL H3

Support building and development standards with improved local hazard resiliency and reduced climate impacts.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:	0-1 YEAR THROUGH 2019	2-3 YEARS 2020-2021	3+ YEARS 2022+
Build/Rebuild better homes and improve existing homes in Wildland Urban Interfaces (WUI) and other high-risk hazard locations with greater local hazard resiliency.			
Facilitate construction hardening techniques appropriate for wildfire/urban interfaces and seismic retrofits for building/rebuilding and existing homes through education and grant programs.			
Help property owners navigate vegetation management opportunities through partnership with Fire Safe Sonoma and similar programs.			
Advocate for funding opportunities for private property vegetation management to complement creating safe zones around homes in high risk areas.			
Build/Rebuild better homes and improve existing homes with improved efficiency and reduced operating costs.			
Facilitate climate positive construction techniques for building/rebuilding homes through consultation and project planning assistance from the Energy and Sustainability Division of General Services.			
Facilitate rebuilding housing with clean energy improvements for firestorm rebuilds through Sonoma Clean Power grant.			

## ACTIONS & TIMELINES

### Housing

# GOAL H3

## GOAL H3

Support building and development standards with improved local hazard resiliency and reduced climate impacts.

### ACTIONS COMPLETED:

- ✓ Applied for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Home Fire Mitigation grant through CalOES to help perform inspections for compliance to defensible space regulations and identification of structural vulnerabilities which may increase risk of wildfire ignitions; provide cost share incentives to help and inspire property owners to reduce vegetation and mitigate vulnerable building elements that pose risk for wildfire ignition; and provide critical education to the public about wildfire loss prevention and preparedness.
- ✓ Applied for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Seismic Retrofits grant through CalOES to implement permanent improvements to structures at high risk of damage from seismic activities, with a specific focus on soft story buildings where the first story that lacks adequate strength or stiffness to prevent leaning or collapse in an earthquake.

## ACTIONS & TIMELINES

### Housing

# GOAL H4

## GOAL H4

Support rebuilding fire destroyed homes.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:	0-1 YEAR THROUGH 2019	2-3 YEARS 2020-2021	3+ YEARS 2022+
Facilitate expedited permitting process for rebuilding homes destroyed by fires.			
Continue to operate Resiliency Permit Center.			
Explore and develop funding options to assist the rebuilding of homes destroyed in the fires.			
Continue to advocate for assistance with insurance issues with the State, as may be appropriate.			
Seek Federal, State, and other funding to assist rebuilding gaps for those seeking to rebuild after the fires.			
Facilitate and support rebuild navigation to assist those seeking to rebuild homes destroyed in the fires.			
Facilitate navigation assistance, including financial advising, insurance claims and rebuilding, for those seeking to rebuild from the fires in partnership with the ROC Sonoma County Recovery Center and with the Health and Human Services Departments (Safety Net).			

## ACTIONS & TIMELINES

### Housing

# GOAL H4

## GOAL H4

Support rebuilding fire destroyed homes.

### ACTIONS COMPLETED:

- ✓ Opened Resiliency Permit Center in February 2018 to expedite rebuild permits.
- ✓ Permitted more than 650 homes through the Resiliency Permit Center through October 2018
- ✓ Advocated for insurance reform at the State.

## ACTIONS & TIMELINES

### Housing

# GOAL H5

## GOAL H5

Explore use of County-owned property to attract housing development that aligns with County goals.

### PROPOSED ACTIONS:

	0-1 YEAR THROUGH 2019	2-3 YEARS 2020-2021	3+ YEARS 2022+
Continue process to evaluate and develop housing on already identified County-owned properties for housing development.			
Evaluate the need for construction worker housing and whether opportunities exist on County-owned properties.			
Continue Request for Proposal process to develop housing at 2150 West College Avenue.			
Continue process to develop housing at Roseland Village.			
Continue efforts to repurpose/sell the Chanate Campus in support of housing goals.			
Identify and evaluate other potential opportunities for housing on County-owned land not yet identified.			
Explore the potential for housing as part of a mixed-use development on the County Administration Center property.			
Continue to identify possible housing opportunities on other County-owned land.			

## ACTIONS & TIMELINES

### Housing

# GOAL H5

## GOAL H5

Explore use of County-owned property to attract housing development that aligns with County goals.

### ACTIONS COMPLETED:

- ✓ A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been issued by the Community Development Commission for the 2150 West College property.
- ✓ The Community Development Commission has completed a two-part RFP process to identify a master developer to develop Roseland Village for affordable and market-rate housing, and is moving forward with development processes.
- ✓ The County of Sonoma and City of Santa Rosa have issued an informational survey and questionnaire regarding the market viability of the County Administration Center campus or other county-owned sites and/or the downtown City Hall Campus for possible development concepts, including office space, government buildings, mixed-use retail, and housing.